

# Consortia for Management College Libraries in the E-Publishing Era: A Proposal

By

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## **Abstract**

*Discusses briefly the concept and significance of consortia in Indian context with a view to justify on the basis of tremendous growth as well as diversity of explicit knowledge, increased users' demands, diminished budgets, galloping prices for subscribing periodicals and purchasing books, etc. Libraries in India have been affected by an uncertain financial environment in which resource buying has been restricted, causing them to look at ways of extending their purchasing capabilities to compensate for reduced budgets. Now with the increase in the electronic publishing and reduced cost of electronic access to resources paved the ways for libraries to embark upon fulfilling the requirements of its clientele within their budget. Libraries have realized or have to realize that working together can accomplish far more than they can do individually. The Advent of E-publishing has brought a revolution in journals publication, subscription and access to scholarly literature and the age of library consortia is at the doorsteps to prove cooperation locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.*

## **Introduction**

The Library and information Centers are increasingly being called upon to provide more relevant, up-to-date and timely information to a wide range of users. To satisfy the varied needs they require availability and accessibility to a variety of information resources and formats (such as digital full-text, sound, graphics, images, multimedia and hypertext, as well as print documents). The libraries, like those in most developing countries, suffer from inadequate funding or stringent budget cuts. This has affected the level of services offered to users both in terms of quality of collections and the degree of staff support provided. In the present circumstances only a few libraries can afford to have a wide range of information resources within their budget. In this circumstance, it would not be wiser or cost-effective to duplicate information resources among the libraries in the country leads to cooperative purchase option through consortia purchase.

Barbara Allen and Arnold Hirshon indicate that, "Perhaps the most important development for libraries during the current decade has been the move from organizational self sufficiency to a collaborative survival mode as personified by the growth of library consortia. In their article "Hanging Together to Avoid Hanging Separately" Allen and Hirshon, emphasized that, information technology is now enabling a level of cooperation that is much broader and deeper than ever before. Technology provides the solution for a problem how to have the same information resource easily accessible to users of each

member of the consortium without incurring the expense of duplication. Today, digital databases licensed to a consortium can be made available to every one in the organization at the same time, making unnecessary the location of a resource at a single site and subsequent physical transport of user to that site or movement of the resource to the user. This paper discusses the consortia in detail explaining the need for consortia, advantages of consortia, and few examples of consortium experiments in India.

### **What is Consortia?**

Basically, consortia means Group of Libraries come together with common interest to form consortium. One of the libraries or agencies work as coordinator for identification of libraries for each publisher, negotiation, Legal matters etc. The aim of consortia is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually.

A Consortium is said to be “a cooperative arrangement among groups or institution,” or “an association or society” (American Heritage Dictionary). Consortia are commonly formed to increase the purchasing power of the collaborating institutions to expand the resource availability and to offer automated services.

***Library consortium is the one of the emerging tool kit for libraries to survive.***

According to Oxford English Dictionary “Consortium means temporary cooperation of a number of powers, companies etc. for a common purpose. It is an association of similar type of organization / institution who are engaged for producing and servicing the common things / for providing services for a specific purpose of its users.” Library consortium is a “community (a cooperative) of two or more information agencies which have formally agreed to coordinate, cooperate or consolidate certain function” to achieve mutual objectives. It is an association of a group of library to achieve mutually the joint benefits. Consortia may be formed on a local, regional, national, or international basis; on a functional or format basis; or on a subject basis.

### **Need for Consortia:**

1. Indian Universities are finding it hard to maintain the subscription to even for core journals due to ever increasing cost of the journals subscription and also shrinking budget.
2. The average number of subscription to international journals by Indian University is even less than 500 titles; where as the average number of American universities is more than 4000 titles.
3. Improving quality standard of research in Indian universities and bringing it to a level of global recognition by improving the access-base of literature to them is essential.
4. Whole world is moving towards electronic publishing and the cost of the electronic publishing is much cheaper than that of the print version.
5. Academic and Research users can now hope to have access to their learned journals articles in electronic form as the electronic access is comparatively cheaper.

### **Consortia - Objectives:**

1. Increase the cost benefit per subscription.
2. Promote the rational use of funds.
3. Ensure the continuous subscription to the periodicals subscribed.
4. Guarantee local storage of the information acquired for continuous use by present and future users.
5. Develop technical capabilities of the staff in operating and using electronic publication databases.

6. Strategic alliance with institutions that have common interest resulting
  - Reduced Information cost.
  - Improved Resource Sharing.

### **The Salient Features for Library Consortium are:**

- ❖ To eliminate the different problems faced by the libraries to provide various services to the users,
- ❖ To meet the thrust of information of the vast people due to rapid growth of population all over the world,
- ❖ To cope up with the newly generated knowledge published in different forms, such as, printed and non-printed documents, electronic media on various disciplines, multi-disciplinary and new generated subject areas,
- ❖ To collect all the documents published at the national and international level, because of the library financial crunch; and
- ❖ To overcome to language barriers i.e. primary documents are being published by the developed countries like USA, UK, France, Japan etc. and among them the non-English speaking countries produce majority of scientific literatures in their mother languages.

### **Library Networks and E-publishing Roots for Consortia Purchase**

1. Technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals, emerging of Consortia, prizing models of publishers gives new opportunities for libraries to provide instant access to information.
2. Number of publishers offers consortia , if their purchase power is big enough access to their whole range of journals – that is every member of the consortium gets electronic access not only to the journals currently subscribed to but all the journals published in the field of management.
3. Many management college libraries currently subscribes only to those journals that they can afford, though interested on other journals but they cannot afford to provide access to those. This approach helps them to provide access.
4. Such a consortium agreement will give the library and also the user extended access- that is better service – and reduce the costs.

### **Types of Consortia**

1. No single model for consortia
2. Varies form highly decentralized organizations to highly centralized ones.
3. The degree of centralization of consortium is the primary factor affecting not only how member institution interact each other, but also relationship with external party (Publisher/vendor).
4. More decentralized the consortium, the greater the degree of autonomy each member retains.
5. Correlation between the amount of autonomy that the individual institution retains and the ability of the consortium to achieve set of goals as a group.
6. If the authority is highly centralized, the consortium is more likely to have dedicated staff to perform ongoing work.

### **Mono-type network**

1. Local or Regional (e.g. city wide groups)
2. Governed by its members
3. No central staff not funding
4. Very flexible but no bargaining power
5. With low common interest. No central authority, no group purchasing power
6. Yields minimum return

### **Multi-type networks**

1. Statewide or multiple state
2. Low common interest
3. Central staff but no funding
4. Some what flexible
5. Little bargaining power

### **The Major Issues of Consortia Approach:**

1. Selecting a coordinating agency to deal on behalf of entire group of participants and executing and monitoring the work.
2. Identification of libraries interested in participating and agreeing to common terms and conditions
3. Identification of potential publishers to provide access under consortia purchase
4. Negotiating with publisher to get a commonly acceptable and affordable price
5. Source of funding to meet the subscription cost
6. Legal issues involved in contracts and usage of material within the consortia
7. Informing the usefulness / importance of the consortia to the VC's Dean of Studies, professors etc to act upon the issues
8. Identifying the necessary infrastructure for electronic access to resources
9. Issues relating to backup of databases
10. Identification & selection of databases to be acquired and hosted by nodal agency & member libraries
11. Documentation and Training of staff
12. Access rights – whether to provide direct access from publisher site or mount databases at nodal agency

### **Examples of consortium initiatives in India**

#### **1. FORSA Consortium**

The Indian Astrophysics Consortium called Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy (FORSA) is a typical example of homogeneous group of members wherein the libraries have common area of interest and establishing the consortium is slightly easier than in heterogeneous type of members. The FORSA consortium consists of five members who joined the consortium for negotiating licensing for astronomy journals and identified a subscription agent as a supplier of journals. Subscriptions for both print and electronic format are paid through their supplier. The agreement made meant for only astronomy journals published by a particular publisher. Under the consortium Nature journal was also subscribed by six libraries those committed to share the license fee to access the Nature electronically.

#### **2. CSIR – Consortium**

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in India has 40 scientific laboratories involved in basic and applied research in various disciplines. Many of the laboratories have well equipped libraries, and some of them act as the main information centres in different subjects functioning as consultant libraries at the national level. Access to electronic journals through the use of state-of-the art technology is possible in many of the libraries belonging to these laboratories. Each of the laboratories have a well established library or documentation centre that is also backed up with strategic information support from the National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resource

(NISCAIR), a constituent establishment of CSIR formed with the merger of INSDOC and (NISCOM). To augment CSIR research and development activities, NISCAIR implemented agency for the process of providing access to globally available Electronic Journals to entire S&T staff of CSIR and its constituent units through a **consortia** approach. As a first step, in recent past INSCAIR on behalf of CSIR has entered into an agreement with M/s. Elsevier Science to access its odd 1,500 e-journals and further intends to strengthen its information resource base by subscribing e-access of more and more journals published globally. CSIR consortium extended its access by creating appropriate agreements on consortium basis with the other providers of E-journals.

### **3. INDEST – consortium**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has set up the “Indian National Digital Library in Science and Technology (INDEST) Consortium”. Under this, the ministry provides funds required for the subscription to electronic resources for 38 institutions including IISc, IITs, NITs, RECs, IIMs and few other centrally funded Government institutions through the consortium. With the financial support from AICTE few other technical institutions have also joined the consortium. It is an open ended proposition, and welcomes other institutions who can join with the similar area of interest for sharing the benefits. The INDEST consortium is the most ambitious initiative taken up so far in the country in the area of engineering and technology disciplines.

### **4. UGC- Infonet Consortium**

The e-subscription initiative under UGC-Infonet is expected to trigger remarkable increase in sharing of both print and electronic resources amongst university libraries through one of the gateway portal being identified. The gateway portals provide customised solution not only to access the resource online but also access resources of other libraries participating in the consortium. The consortium headquarter (INFLIBNET) is assigned to function as a resource center with an aim to cater to the needs of its members for resources not accessible to them in electronic media or are available in print media. With subscribed resources accessible online in electronic format, the member libraries would have less pressure on space requirement for storing and managing print-based library resources. Moreover, all problems associated with print media such as their wear and tear, location, shelving, binding, organizing, etc. would not be an issue for electronic resources.

## **Examples of consortium initiatives at International Level**

### **1. International Coalition of Library Consortia:**

The International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) is an informal organization that began meeting in 1997. Comprising about sixty library consortia in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Israel, and Australia, the Coalition represents over 5,000 member libraries worldwide. The Coalition serves primarily higher education institutions by facilitating discussion among its members on issues of common interest. ICOLC conducts meetings to keep its members informed about new electronic information resources, pricing practices of electronic providers and vendors, and other issues of importance to consortium directors and their governing boards. These meetings also provide a forum for consortial representatives to meet with the information provider community, discuss their products, and engage in a dialog with Coalition members about issues of mutual concern. The ICOLC also maintains list serves and web pages for the benefit of its members. Information about the ICOLC can be found at <http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia>

## **eIFL.net**

eIFL.net is an independent foundation that strives to lead, negotiate, support and advocate for the wide availability of electronic resources by library users in transition and developing countries. Its main focus is on negotiating affordable subscriptions on a multi-country consortial basis, while supporting the enhancement of emerging national library consortia in member countries.

eIFL started in October 1999, as an initiative of the Open Society Institute (OSI), a private grant-making and operating foundation, part of the Soros Foundation network. In the 1990ies, OSI made significant investment in library development and modernization in the countries of its network, especially in the post socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the former Soviet Union. These countries traditionally had a sophisticated educational system and, undoubtedly, represented emerging markets for international providers of scholarly information. However, the high subscription costs, as well as the relatively little awareness of the electronic alternative to print subscriptions kept these countries deprived from the wealth of international academic journals and databases.

### **Drawbacks in Indian situation**

- Lack of awareness about consortia benefits.
- Slow acceptance of e-information by the users.
- Difficulties in changing the mind setup of librarians.
- Maintenance and balancing both physical and digital library.
- Inadequate funds.
- Single point payment.
- Rigid administrative, financial and auditing rules.
- Problems of defining asset against payment.
- Pay-Per-View not yet acceptable.
- Uncertainty about the persistence of digital resources.
- Lack of infrastructure for accessing electronic sources.
- Unreliable telecom links and insufficient bandwidth.
- Lack of appropriate bibliographic tools.
- Lack of trained personnel for handling new technologies.
- Absence of strong professional associations.
- Big brother attitude of libraries.

These drawbacks need to be overcome to ensure the effective utilization of electronic resources.

### **The Question is: How Can This Be Done?**

The answer to this simple question is quite simple too. The library must - in co- operation with other libraries - develop and implement a strategy consisting of a combination of the

following features: Funds have to be made available from the library budget. This can be done the following way:

1. Reduce the library "paper work" - that is whenever there is an electronic edition of a journal, the library will not handle the printed version. This is meant very literally. The printed edition will not be registered, bar coded and made shelf ready: the printed edition will be non-existent in the library. This means that internal work procedures have to change accordingly.
2. Secondly prepare an adjustment of staff numbers - the reduction of the "paper work" must be followed by reducing the staff involved in those operations. What is suggested here is really, that you up front cash in the cost savings by not providing *both* print and electronic versions of specific journals
3. Thirdly invest in education and training for the staff to perform new work processes. The library management must invest significant efforts in building consortia with other libraries in the region, on the national and international level. The available funds from the above maneuvers can be used for buying access to electronic journals and databases.

Establish co-operation with other libraries in building local hardware set-ups and interfaces that can handle large amounts of databases and electronic journals. Groups of libraries can - if they are determined - establish digital libraries with lots and lots of content available instantly for their users.

### **An Example of a Funding formula for Consortia:**

In this model, library members of a consortium decide upon annual target goals to fund their anticipated needs. Then an assessment is developed based upon these target goals, with each participating member assessing their cost share according to the following formula:

Member Share	25% of the target, divided by the number of participating Libraries
Site Share	25% of the target, divide by the number of participating library sites
Port Share	50% of the target, divide by the number of active ports.

A library pays the member share x 1, the site share x 1 or more (for a branch or branches), and the port share x the number of ports it is using on the system.

For Example Assume 20 participating management libraries in Mumbai and 35 sites with a total of 400 workstations. Participation means any library or group of libraries accessing the automated system for whatever purpose. To measure of participation is not the level of activity, number of functions accessed, or services utilized; rather it is the number of ports used by that library or group of libraries.

Assume a target goal of 500,000. Thus:

Member share (25%):	$125,000/20 \text{ libraries}=6,250/\text{library}$
Site share (25%):	$125,000/35 \text{ sites}=3,571/\text{site}$
Port share(50%):	$250,000/400 \text{ ports}=625/\text{port}$

Above table illustrates how the assessments would work for three consortium members, where Management Library A is a single library with no branches using 12 ports: Management library B is one with one branch site using 20 ports: and Group of Management libraries is a group with four members using 50 ports.

Table .1 Allocation of Consortium assessment

	Library A	Library B	Group of Libraries
Participant share	6,250	6,250	6,250
Site share	3,571	7,142	14,284
Port share	7,500	12,500	31,250
Total assessment	17,321	25,892	51,784

### Conclusion

The unending responsibility of libraries are collection development, preservation, retrieval of information for providing users service. These responsibilities have become more complex with the introduction of computer and communication technologies in libraries. In a developing country like India, different steps are being taken to disseminate information more or less in all subject areas, specially in science and technology and Any set of objectives will only be achieved, if there is a willingness to join together and to believe that more will be achieved through the efforts of the whole than at the individual level. According to Allen Kent *'the success and survival of libraries will much depend on how much and to what extent the libraries cooperate with each other in future'*. So cooperation is an essential facet of modern library management in most developed countries of the world, but in our country is still in the normative stage. Tremendous explosion of information, financial constraints, information in different forms etc., the resource sharing networking has emerged as important alternatives. In the light of the above discussion, establishment of better consortium, integrating intellectual access are all the distinct steps moving towards the 21st century libraries. Indian librarians should seriously rethink and reinstitute consortium movement like western countries for maximum utilization of resources at a reduced cost, time and space.

The term consortia or group of libraries coming together for buying e-information has become very important in the last two decades with the emergence of e-publishing. Libraries have realized or have to realize that working together can accomplish far more than they can do individually. The age of library consortia is at the doorsteps to prove cooperation locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It is an encouraging sign with good number of consortia efforts are done in India by the consortium for group of libraries falling under certain disciplines viz. FORSA for Astronomy CSIR for Scientific labs, INDEST for libraries in the area of Engineering and Technology including management libraries. The e-subscription activity under consortia is to covers all the disciplines with the heterogeneous nature institutions. A very systematic approach has been adopted and the subscription is purely based on the thorough understanding of the needs of consortium members. This approach has helped to get attractive discounted rates and most of e publishers responded positively to the call and offered the best possible offers. Another reason is due to the eagerness of publishers to enter the Indian market. The gateway portals provide customized solution not only to access the resource online but also access resources of other libraries participating in the consortium. The consortium would be assigned to function as a resource center with an aim to cater to the needs of its members for resources



not accessible to them in electronic media or are available in print media. With subscribed resources accessible online in electronic format, the member libraries would have less pressure on space requirement for storing and managing print- based library resources. Moreover, all problems associated with print media such as their wear and tear, location, shelving, binding, organizing, etc. would not be an issue for electronic resources.

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